

## **Glenrowan Heritage Precinct, Glenrowan (VHR H2000)**

### **Heritage permit for Inland Rail project – Q&A**

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#### **Why is Glenrowan Heritage Precinct of cultural heritage significance?**

Glenrowan Heritage Precinct is associated with the notorious siege of June 1880, the events of which resulted in the capture of Ned Kelly and the deaths of his other gang members.

The precinct is divided by the railway line which played a pivotal role in the events. The northern part of the precinct includes the site of the railway station, Jones' Glenrowan Inn where the bushrangers held out, and the location where Ned Kelly was finally captured. The southern part of the precinct includes the site of former McDonnell's Hotel where Kelly sympathisers gathered, and a large railway paddock now known as Lions Park. A road overpass, constructed in 1961, crosses the railway line at Beaconsfield Parade. The overpass and pedestrian walkway down to the northern rail reserve are modern elements of no heritage value.

The precinct is included in the National Heritage List and the Victorian Heritage Register for its historical and archaeological values.

#### **What has happened?**

Heritage Victoria has issued a permit (P35524) which allows for the demolition of the existing Beaconsfield Parade overpass, construction of a new bridge and approach embankments, relocation of underground services, drains, footpaths and adjoining roads, and temporary use of adjoining areas for construction materials and equipment. The new bridge will be larger and higher than the existing overpass.

The works are required as part of the Inland Rail project, a 1,700 kilometre freight rail network that will connect Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria. The project is being delivered by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) and will enable double height freight trains to operate on the network. The double height freight trains critical to Inland Rail will not fit underneath the existing Beaconsfield Parade overpass. Failure to resolve this issue will mean the whole Inland Rail project is unable to be delivered.

#### **What other options were considered?**

ARTC considered and dismissed a range of alternative options to resolve this issue at Glenrowan. This included lowering the line by up to 2.3 metres through the precinct, construction of a rail bypass around Glenrowan, and an alternative route via Shepparton.

All other options were dismissed for reasons including bushfire egress issues, ecology impacts, topography issues, land acquisition, community safety and performance advantages.

Replacement of the bridge with an at-grade level crossing was also considered. This option was dismissed as it would introduce an interface between pedestrian/vehicle and train traffic which would increase the risk to community safety. The introduction of new level crossings is also inconsistent with Victorian Government policy.

## **Why has the permit been approved?**

On 9 August 2022 the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria approved the heritage permit.

Many different options were considered by ARTC to overcome the clearance issue at the Beaconsfield Parade overpass. When considering all competing factors, including heritage, environment, design constraints, potential property acquisition, bushfire egress, connectivity to the Hume Highway, traffic management and tourism, ARTC determined that the option to replace the existing overpass with a larger, higher bridge was the only feasible option.

Earthworks required as part of the project may identify highly significant archaeological remains. These impacts will be managed by an appropriately qualified archaeologist who will supervise the earthworks in accordance with an Archaeological Management Plan.

Heritage Victoria acknowledges that the new bridge will be up to 4 metres taller and 20 metres longer than the existing bridge. This will have a significant visual impact within the precinct.

The removal of the existing bridge embankments and construction of an open-span bridge will allow views across the precinct. This will result in some improved heritage outcomes.

The new bridge has been designed to be as lightweight as possible while meeting functional requirements, which will reduce its visual impact on the precinct. Landscaping including the planting of trees and vegetation will be used to screen the new structure.

The new bridge will provide all-ability access across the Glenrowan Heritage Precinct.

The project will also introduce improved landscaping and interpretation across the site, in collaboration with the Rural City of Wangaratta's interpretation centre in the southern part of the precinct. This will improve the visitor experience and enhance our understanding of the State and National heritage values of the precinct.